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ABSTRACT

While initiative in educational policy formation has shifted increasingly away from local and federal to state-level policy systems, policy problems continue to be compounded by intellectual problems related to weak conceptualization and inadequate analysis. Policy debates of the 20th Century have focused successively on education efficiency, equity, and in the 1980s, quality. The great variety and lack of clarity of new state programs attempting to balance these three policy goals suggest the need for a systematic taxonomy of key state policy elements. Although several empirical taxonomies have previously been proposed, a theoretical taxonomy is needed for the classification of state policy straategies. Such a taxonomy may emphasize social values, economic consequences, or as in the present study, the basic control mechanisms of various policy choices. State policy makers have at their disposal seven such mechanisms: (1) structural organization of the school, (2) revenue generation, (3) resource allocation, (4) educational program definition and accreditation, (5) personnel training and certification, (6) testing and assessment of student progress, and (7) curriculum materials development and selection. Further research is needed to determine how these mechanisms might interact with each other to enable schools to pursue the three historical goals of public schooling. (JBM)

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ALTERNATIVE STATE POLICY MECHANISMS FOR INFLUENCING SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

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ALTERNATIVE STATE POLICY MECHANISMS FOR INFLUENCING SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

INTRODUCTION: STATE EDUCATIONAL POLICY GOALS

State governments have come a long way since the mid-nineteenth century when, "evidence that venality had uprooted the public trust appeared in state after state" (Keefe and Ogul, 1977:41). If they have not yet fully become the "workhorses of our federal system" (Sharkansky, 1972), they are well on their way to doing so. State-level policy making, especially in the arena of education, has become a major focal point for both supporters and critics of current governmental services (see Kearney and Vander Putten, 1979; Jennings, 1981).

A wide variety of political, economic and social forces have been responsible for shifting the initiative in educational policy formation away from local and federal actors to state-level policy systems. Most prominent among them are: 1) diminished ideological support and the lack of an adequate constitutional basis for sustaining an expansive federal involvement, 2) continued pressure from disadvantaged and minority populations for intervention on their behalf, 3) economic and labor market changes requiring students to secure more flexible and technically advanced skills, 4) geographical separation of business and industrial centers from residential neighborhoods distorting the capacity of local districts to

adequately fund education, and 5) substantial judicial intervention into the affairs of local school districts as a result of heightened conflicts among school clients, teachers, and administrators. These forces, combined with rapid changes in economic conditions, demographic shifts, and substantial political or social conflicts have tended to overwhelm many local school districts (Wirt and Kirst, 1982).

In addition to these external pressures pushing policy making activities away from the local and federal levels, important internal forces have been at work drawing policy making initiative into the hands of state-level decision makers. Title V of ESEA (1965), for example, provided significant resources to State Departments of Education, in many cases giving them the capacity for analysis and planning for the first time. Legislative reapportionment following Baker v. Carr (369 U.S. 186, 1962) also led to fundamental shifts in state policy making. Reapportionment altered the balance of power among major interest groups in most state legislatures. It also encouraged the professionalization of legislators and their staffs. The overall result, as Murphy (1982) notes, is that state level "education agencies and legislative staff have increasing numbers of expert, change-oriented people."

The expanding state role in policy formation has resulted in a dramatic increase in both the rate and the scope of new education policy initiatives in most states. In California, for example,

> To cite but a few of the most obvious examples, schools have asked to make major changes: (1) in the traditional relationships among teachers, administrators and school boards as a result of legislation on collective bargaining, credentialing, and staff development; (2) in their academic program structure and planning procedures through Early Childhood Education and a Master Plan for Special Education; (3) in their emphasis on learning outcomes through the development of proficiency or competency testing; (4) in the scope of client rights through new discipline and due process legislation; (5) in their attention to disadvantaged and minority populations through compensatory and bilingual programs; (6) in the nature and extent of parent/citizen participation in planning and governance through legislation on public disclosure, advisory committees, and school site councils; and (7) in their funding and taxing patterns through a series of statutes aimed at compliance with the Serrano decision. (Mitchell & Iannaccone, 1979)

Although the California experience may not be typical, Odden & Dougherty (1982) report that at least six other states (Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Maryland, Missouri, and

Pennsylvania) have adopted "comprehensive" school improvement programs. (And Florida should certainly be added to this list as one of the most active state policy systems).

The fact that state policy makers have become visibly (some might even say frenetically) active does not necessarily mean that these new state policy initiatives are either potent instruments for shaping school performance or that they are adequately linked to their intended goals. To the contrary, vitriolic critics of education policies in every state frequently charge that recent efforts are arbitrary, inappropriate, ineffective, misguided, or worse. State policy makers themselves often feel that their decisions are less than fully coherent and consistent -- thus recognizing that their work is less effective than they would like it to be.

Many of the shortcomings of current state policies are, of course, to a substantial degree the natural consequence of ordinary political problems like scarce resources, conflicting interests, divergent goals, and inequitable distribution of political power. Especially in education, however, policy problems are compounded by the intellectual problems related to weak conceptualization and inadequate analysis. Neither scholars nor policy makers have clearly developed conceptual frameworks for interpreting the goals of state level education policy or the alternative mechanisms through which those goals can be effectively pursued. While better conceptual frameworks will not eliminate conflict and controversy, they could significantly

improve the quality of education policy deliberations and reduce the likelihood that public schools will be subjected to wasteful, irrelevant, or self-defeating policy constraints. This paper offers a modest beginning on the needed conceptual development process.

As elaborated in the remainder of this paper, the bulk of state education policy can be best understood as a matter of using some combination of seven basic policy mechanisms (i.e., structural organization, revenue generation, resource allocation, personnel training & certification, program definition & accreditation, curriculum materials selection & development, and student testing & assessment) to pursue one or more of three competing education goals (efficiency, equity, and quality).

We look first at the three competing policy goals which have dominated public education policy debates throughout the twentieth century and then describe the seven policy mechanisms for promoting them.

EDUCATIONAL QUALITY: THE POLICY GOAL OF THE 1980's

Efficiency emerged as a dominant educational policy theme in the 1920's and remained a pre-eminent concern of policy makers until the late 1950's (Callahan, 1962; Tyack, 1974). Equity emerged as a primary issue beginning with the Brown vs. Board of Education decisions (347 U.S. 483, 1954 & 349 U.S. 294, 1955), and remained the most important problem facing education throughout the late 50's, the 1960's and well into the 1970's.

In the wake of the Sputnik launching in 1957 the issue of quality began to develop (Mitchell and Iannaccone, 1979; Mitchell, 1982; Mason, 1972). Until the documentation of declining test scores and the successful organization of teachers into collective bargaining units, however, it was interpreted primarily as a matter of inadequate planning and financing rather than as an issue of educational reform or improvement.

By the early 1970's quality had emerged as a major concern in a majority of the states. Declining test scores, lack of positive findings from major evaluation studies, concern over declining productivity in American industry, and criticism of the skills of entering college freshmen and army recruits, combined with ongoing concern about public school performance to give terms like "excellence", "competency", "achievement", and "quality" new urgency in policy debates. As suggested by the overlapping circles in Figure 1, however, equity and efficiency were not completely abandoned as fundamental policy goals. Rather, a tension among these three educational policy goals was created. Some policy makers and policy decisions continue to give primary attention to problems of the efficient use of resources, and some continue to give dominant attention to equity problems. Clearly, however, demands for improved quality in the education received by America's children has become a dominant force in most state policy systems.

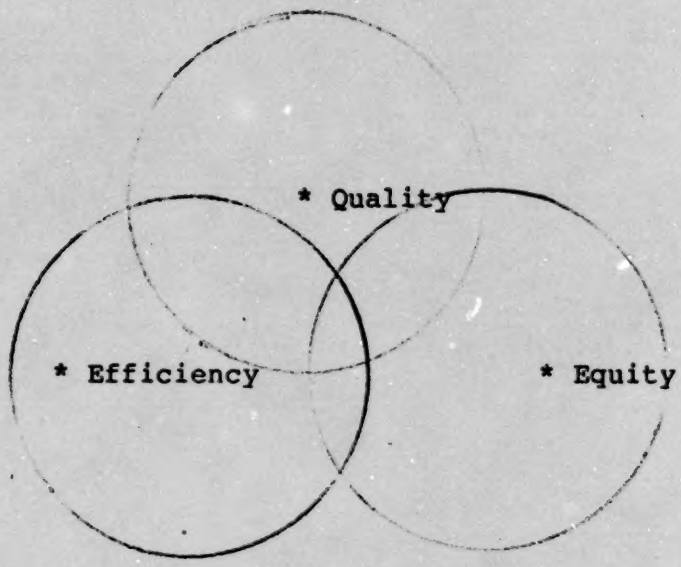

FIGURE 1. THREE OVERLAPPING EDUCATIONAL POLICY GOALS

The existence of sharp tensions between efficiency, equity and quality goals does not necessarily lead to a "zero-sum" choice to pursue one goal at the expense of the others. It is possible, at least theoretically, to formulate policies which facilitate the pursuit of all three goals simultaneously (i.e., lie in the intersection of all three circles in Figure 1). Practically speaking however, when the thrust of basic policy shifts as dramatically as it has in recent years, balanced pursuit of all major policy goals is seriously endangered. On the basis of available evidence, it is impossible to determine with any certainty whether recent state efforts to improve educational quality are either: a) succeeding in reaching their stated purposes, or b) significantly affecting the pursuit of

long-standing efficiency and equity goals. It is important, therefore, to map the variety of quality improvement polices being attempted in various states, ascertain how those policies are being implemented, and examine what impact they are having on local school operations and outcomes. Identifying quality improvement strategies which work, and which also support efficient and equitable delivery of educational services to all children is of paramount importance in assuring the health of the nation's public school system.

The variety of new state policy initiatives adopted during the 1970's is striking. As mentioned above, some states adopted comprehensive school improvement programs integrating into a unified strategy various combinations of fiscal, organizational, staff development, curriculum enhancement and student assessment elements (Odden & Dougherty, 1982; McLaughlin, 1981). Most states, however, have undertaken narrower, and frequently less vigorous, initiatives in this area. Among these more limited programs, the most frequent area of concentration has been some form of student and/or teacher testing and assessment. Arizona, Nebraska, New Mexico, South Carolina and Wisconsin have concentrated on this approach. Once comprehensive school improvement programs and various testing and assessment policies are identified, it is difficult to discover any systematic taxonomy that can meaningfully classify the great variety of other state policy initiatives. Even the empirically simple distinction between comprehensive school improvement strategies

and narrow testing and assessment programs is not very helpful if we are trying to analyze why states adopt particular policy approaches, predict whether adopted policies will be effectively implemented, or determine how school operations and outcomes will be affected. Not only is some form of testing and assessment a part of every comprehensive school improvement program, but new testing programs are only one part of a state's overall school policy system and might be appropriately characterized as one element in a comprehensive quality improvement strategy that has developed "piece-meal" over a period of years. Nor is it clear that either the various "comprehensive programs" or the different approaches to test construction, administration and interpretation are sufficiently similar to justify treating them as single policy strategies.

The great variety of new state programs and the lack of clarity about what can be expected from particular policies mean that effective policy analysis requires the development of a systematic taxonomy for distinguishing and classifying key state policy elements. How such a taxonomy is constructed will have a powerful impact on our conception of the significance, purpose, and effectiveness of various policy options.

A TAXONOMY OF STATE POLICY STRATEGIES

The needed taxonomy could be either "empirical" or "theoretical" in character. An empirical taxonomy would look closely at similarities and differences among existing policies in order to cluster them into meaningful groups. Several

tentative approaches to constructing such an empirical taxonomy can be found in the literature. The Odden & Dougherty study (1982), for example, offers two such taxonomies. In summarizing their findings, these authors identify seven general state policy patterns -- based on the targets toward which the policies are directed. They are: 1) work force improvement, 2) curricular guidance, 3) accreditation and program review, 4) comprehensive improvement programs, 5) dissemination and assistance programs, 6) testing programs, and 7) parent involvement or information dissemination programs. In detailing the elements of actual state programs, however, this study identifies some 18 different policy initiatives which are being implemented in various states -- and it is far from obvious how some of these 18 policies are related to the seven clusters used in their summary.

McLaughlin (1981) offers a somewhat different approach to constructing an empirical taxonomy. She insists that it is necessary to consider the intensity or "level" of state-level action as well as its "nature" in distinguishing among policy options -- for the obvious reason that nominally identical policies when pursued with various levels of enthusiasm will probably have very different effects.

Findings from a recent study of California's School Improvement Program suggest a still different approach to empirical taxonomy construction (Manifest International, 1981). This study looked at the responses of local school districts and

found that how the program actually operates depends heavily upon the conceptual interpretation of it prevailing within a given local school district. It concluded that the California School Improvement Program is variously viewed as aimed primarily at: 1) educational change, 2) development of the school community, 3) consolidation of categorical aid programs, or 4) providing a new source of much needed funds. These four district responses substantially affect the overall character of the program -- turning it into four substantially different policies.

In examining the forces responsible for the adoption of various legislative policies, Mitchell (1981) distinguished policies on the basis of their importance as "issues" in the policy system. He, therefore, separated state policies into: structural reorganization, finance, labor relations and personnel, basic skills, categorical programs, and special education policies. Kirst (1980) has taken a similar approach in his analysis of various social networks influencing policy in the four issue areas of: finance, labor relations, creationism, and competency testing.

An extended review of the literature on state-level policy would identify other efforts to describe basic alternatives and create an empirical taxonomy of state policies. These taxonomies tend to rely on distinctions such as: support vs. accountability, mandatory vs. voluntary, fiscal vs. regulative, complex vs. single purpose policies. Though important, such

distinctions are overlapping and interactive making it difficult to know how to meaningfully proceed with an analysis of the relative merits of particular policy strategies. What is needed is a theoretical taxonomy. One which provides a systematic and orderly basis for classifying state policy strategies.

Three essentially different approaches to the creation of a theoretical taxonomy can be found in recent literature. The first approach, illustrated in Garms, Guthrie and Pierce (1978), distinguishes policies on the basis of the fundamental social values which they embody. (These authors assert that "equality", "efficiency" and "liberty" are the most basic values in school finance policy formulation). Kaufman (1956) developed the classic formulation of this social value-based taxonomy, arguing that the three values of "democratic legitimacy", "organizational efficiency", and "neutral technical competence" are held in constant tension in American politics -- and are implicitly endorsed by any particular policy choice. This value-based approach is quite useful in distinguishing quality improvement policies from those aimed at equity or efficiency, but it is not very helpful in distinguishing among alternative approaches to any one of these basic educational policy goals.

A second theoretical approach to creating a policy taxonomy was developed by Theodore Lowi (1964). Lowi's taxonomy emphasizes the economic consequences of various policy choices. (He originated the distinction between "distributive", "re-distributive", and "regulatory" policies -- later adding a

fourth policy type, "constituency", to this list). In this taxonomy policies are classified according to the distribution of the costs and benefits which result from their enactment.

While Lowi's taxonomy appears to have significant utility in explaining the political processes which lead to adoption (or rejection) of particular policies, it does not appear promising if we are trying to ascertain the overall effects of those policies on the quality of governmental services or to examine linkages between policy goals and the mechanisms which are being utilized to pursue them.

A third approach to creating a theoretical taxonomy focuses on the basic control mechanisms employed rather than social values or economic consequences. Mitchell & Iannaccone (1979), looking at legislative impact on school operations adopt this approach. They argue that there are but three basic legislative control mechanisms (resource allocation, rule making and ideology articulation) and suggest that these basic policy mechanisms interact with structural arrangements, decision making processes, and work orientations operative within local school districts to determine the impact of any legislative policy. A slightly different approach to the identification of fundamental policy mechanisms is found in a recent report to the California State Board of Education (Educational Management and Evaluation Commission, 1982). This report argues that state policy makers (whether in the legislative, executive or judicial branches of government) have at their disposal seven strategic

mechanisms for influencing local school performance. These basic mechanisms (structural organization, revenue generation, resource allocation, program definition, curriculum materials development, personnel training & certification, and testing or assessment of student achievement) are used, singly or in combination, to support various educational goals.

The remainder of this paper elaborates those seven policy mechanisms and argues that they represent an exhaustive and mutually exclusive set of taxonomic categories for classifying and comparing state policy mechanisms.

1. Structural Organization (Governance) of the School.

One important group of state policies are those which define, and allocate powers to various structural units within the school system. During the first half of this century, when efficiency was the dominant educational issue, school district reorganization and consolidation were the primary structural changes sought by state policy makers. During the 50's, when equity was emerging as the dominant policy issue, structural reforms emphasized bringing citizen groups and school clients into the local decision making process through the creation of various citizen planning and advisory bodies. (See Cremin, 1964; Iannaccone & Cistone, 1976; Reed & Mitchell, 1975; and Langton, 1978 for a review of these changes).

When queried about educational improvement policies, state officials indicate that structural changes of three basic types are being adopted. Most frequent are new support structures

aimed at assisting local educators with planning and implementation of programs. Second are new agencies for monitoring school performance or compliance with state policy (frequently with control over teacher certification, school accreditation, or student testing policies). And third are new collaborative structures (such as teacher centers, research and development centers, or educational technology and staff development agencies) aimed at bringing administrator, teacher, and citizen groups together in new ways (see Odden & Dougherty, 1982).

It appears that the tension between efficiency and equity goals creates a tension between centralization and decentralization approaches to school governance. Quality advocates are more ambivalent, however. Where quality improvement concerns are expressed through an emphasis on enforcement of performance standards for teachers and/or students, policy makers seem to prefer centralized governance structures. When quality improvement is equated with innovation and creativity in school programs, however, policy makers tend to believe that greater decentralization of governance powers will improve school performance.

2. Revenue Generation.

A second cluster of state policies determine who will pay for educational services (and how much they will pay). Until the mid-nineteenth century, education was viewed primarily as a private good and support was predominantly a matter of private

financing. As the establishment of common schools became widespread, however, this view changed rapidly. Education came to be perceived as a public good and school finance became a matter of widely debated public policy.

One important factor affecting who pays for the public schools is the distribution of financial responsibility across local, state, and national governmental levels. Efficiency oriented policy makers have traditionally advocated decentralization of revenue decisions on the grounds that local school districts would remain more responsive to the values and interests of diverse constituencies. When financial support from higher governmental levels has been sought by efficiency oriented educators, they have usually asked for increased overall support for the schools while strenuously resisting any shift of decision making powers to centralized funding agencies.

With the emergence of educational equity as a major policy goal, substantial pressures for centralization of school revenue generation were created. Thus, for example, though federal funds have always provided a relatively small proportion of the total cost of public education, federal contributions doubled in the 1966-67 school year (following passage of ESEA), vividly displaying a triumph of equity over efficiency policy goals. Recent equity-oriented court decisions have contributed to the shift of financial decision making from local districts to state legislatures in many states. Equity oriented policy makers concentrate on assuring that the costs of schooling will be

assessed on the basis of citizens' ability to pay, rather than on their level of desire for schooling services.

The emergence of quality as a central policy issue has focused attention on the overall level of school funding in many states. It has also called attention to the importance of making revenue decisions in a timely and dependable fashion so that schools can anticipate future funding decisions and plan expenditures accordingly. Arguments over whether funds should be raised from local, state, or federal taxes are seen as less important to quality oriented policy makers. They are more concerned whith whether revenue sources will be stable and suitably buffered against rapid changes in political and/or economic conditions (Benson, 1978; Garms, Guthrie & Pierce, 1978).

3. Resource Allocation Policy.

A substantial body of state-level policy is aimed at directing the allocation of fiscal an human resources to various school activities or educational inputs. When efficiency was central, resource allocation policy emphasized creating economies of scale by mass purchasing of standardized school components (like textbooks, school plants, or special education services). Policy makers with an efficiency orientation also tended to turn fiscal planning over to education professionals who were seen as better able to make economically sound purchases.

With the emergence of the equity issue, fiscal allocation

moved to categorical funding and close monitoring of expenditures. (This shift is reviewed by Garms, Guthrie & Pierce, 1978). With the emergence of quality as a central issue, fiscal policy has been moving in two different directions. On the one hand, fiscal policies have shifted toward putting greater flexibility into the hands of local policy makers (through block grants and de-regulation of budget decisions). Paradoxically, fiscal policy makers have also sought to tighten fiscal accountability processes by tying funding to the development of specific school site or district programs and plans. Less vigorously pursued, but still important, has been the development of various differentiated staffing and incentive funding programs.

4. Educational Program Definition and Accreditation.

State policy decisions have a substantial impact on the amount of time students spend on various school subjects, and establish standards for program structure through accreditation. Efficiency policies created universalistic standards, involving state regulation of the number of hours and days children must be in school and often specifying the number of minutes to be devoted to various subjects. Grade structures, tracking systems, and the universal adoption of the Carnegie unit also played a part in the development of efficiency oriented school programs.

The equity movement challenged many of the basic tenets of the efficiency approach to program structuring, however. Equity oriented policy makers emphasized the undesirable consequences

of tracking and special class assignment for disadvantaged groups. A potent argument for this shift is found in Judge Wright's opinion in Hobson v. Hansen (269 Fed. Supp. 401, 1967).

Recent quality improvement policies have emphasized the importance of local planning and program development. Recognizing that effectiveness depends upon adaptation to local conditions and personal commitment by those who must implement any school improvement program, quality oriented policy makers have sought ways to enhance dissemination of program options and expanded support for local planning efforts (see Berman, 1978 and Berman & McLaughlin, 1975 for evidence and a rationale supporting this strategy). Program review and more stringent school accreditation requirements have also been adopted in a number of states.

5. Personnel Training and Certification.

A fifth category of state level policies are those governing the training and certification of school personnel. Teacher certification and tenure policies were key elements in the "transformation of the school" (Cremin, 1964) by the early twentieth century efficiency movement.

The equity thrust of the 1950's and 60's challenged the legitimacy of established certification systems, insisting that teachers be exposed to minority children and that minority citizens be given a chance to enter the profession in greater numbers. Thus equity policies expanded pre-service exposure to diverse student populations and supported affirmative action

hiring policies.

Quality improvement policies have concentrated on expanding both pre-service and in-service teacher training requirements related to subject matter knowledge and classroom techniques. The development of performance incentives for both teachers and administrators has also received substantial attention. Most recently, the recruitment, retention and performance of math and science teachers has become a major concern.

6. Testing and Assessment of Student Progress.

In most states, state-level decisions significantly affect the nature, frequency, and consequences of student testing and assessment processes. To a significant degree, the development of the standardized achievement test was the backbone of the efficiency movement. Standardization of student assessment promised to make it possible to focus just the right amount and type of effort on each child.

The equity movement challenged the validity and reliability of the established testing policies, however, claiming that they are biased. At the same time, some equity supporters have sought to use available test information to argue that minority children are not being equitably served by the schools (Mercer, 1978-79, reviews this argument).

As indicated previously, testing strategies have played a prominent role in many recent state-level policies aimed at quality improvement. The development of "criterion referenced" and "minimum competency" tests have shifted attention away from

the use of tests to evaluate student achievement and toward the assessment of educational program effectiveness.

7. Curriculum Materials Development and Selection.

A seventy cluster of state policies influences the quantity and quality of instructional materials available in the schools. Establishment of standard textbooks was a major element in the efficiency movement. With the emergence of the equity issue, however, the question of text content became a legal and moral matter, not just a professional or educational one (Schaffarzick & Sykes, 1979).

The development of new and different types of curricular materials was the first major thrust of recent educational quality improvement policies. Major new curricula in mathematics, social studies, and the physical sciences were developed during the 1960's under the sponsorship of the National Defense Education Act (1957). Substantial innovations in computer-assisted and computer-managed instruction have also been forthcoming in the last few years. Recent surveys of state policy makers, however, suggest that curriculum development has been receiving less attention than the other basic state policy domains during the last few years (Odden & Dougherty, 1982; McLaughlin, 1981).

Each of the six policy mechanisms described above play a substantial role in shaping the nature and quality of educational service delivery. The relative impact of specific policy choices on the overall quality of public education, and

their simultaneous effects of the pursuit of earlier equity or efficiency goals is far from clear, however. Careful research is needed to clarify how each policy mechanism interacts with the others to reinforce (or perhaps weaken) support for the basic goals of schooling.

SUMMARY

The categorical taxonomy of state education policy mechanisms developed in this paper is summarized in Figure 2. The central thrust of policies aimed at each of the three historical goals of public schooling -- efficiency, equity, and quality -- are shown in the three columns of the figure. The seven distinctive policy mechanisms through which states pursue these various goals are shown in the rows of the figure. As suggested by the terms in each cell, the particular form which policies in each domain are given determines whether states will move toward one or another basic goal. Though policies can probably be devised that will enable the schools to pursue all three goals simultaneously, there has been a strong historical tendency for states to pursue only one goal at a time; neglecting or suppressing the others.

In closing, we would offer two observations about the relationships among the seven policy mechanisms described in this paper. First, we note that when the California Legislature passed its first general education law in 1851, it provided for:

-the creation of school districts and election of school boards (an organizational structure

policy),

-the certification of teachers (a personnel training and certification policy),

-the establishment of a basic school curriculum (a program definition policy), and

-the raising of local revenues (a revenue generation policy).

During the previous year California had adopted a State Constitution which further mandated that the state:

-select textbooks for elementary schools (thus providing an instructional materials policy), and

-distribute these materials, without cost, to local school districts (thus initiating resource allocation policy).

Over the next one hundred and thirty years, only one additional policy mechanism -- testing and assessment of student progress -- was added to this initial set of strategic control mechanisms.

Thus, since the inception of public education in California, education policy making has involved decisions in each of the seven conceptually distinct (though empirically related) policy mechanisms. Each of the basic policy mechanisms was early recognized as a potential source of guidance and control over the capacity of public schools to reach their intended goals.

The second point to be made about the relationships among the policy mechanisms outlined in this paper was best made by the California Educational Management and Evaluation Committee in its recent report. The EMEC said,

> It is erroneously, but widely, believed that all important (or perhaps the only important) governance decisions involve the allocation of fiscal resources to particular purposes, programs or agencies. Resource allocation is, of course, important. But its exaggerated importance in the eyes of many educators, policy-makers and citizen groups interferes with their ability to recognize other important governance issues and actions. As a result, the belief that financial decisions are the only important ones has become, to a disturbing degree, a self-fulfilling prophesy. When many people rely exclusively on fiscal policy to shape school programs and operations it becomes easy to believe that decisions not accompanied by fiscal resources need not be taken seriously or that policy makers who really want changed behavior must be willing to "pay for" it with new resources. (EMEC, 1982, p. 7)

The taxonomy of state policy mechanisms developed in this paper represents a starting point for assessing the relative

impact of qualitatively different types of policy decisions on the effectiveness of the public schools. While substantial research and analysis is needed before we can confidently describe the relationship among these different policy mechanisms, a fuller awareness of the options described in this paper and of their potential for either mutual reinforcement or disastrous interference could substantially improve the quality of current state-level policy debates.

FIGURE 2. A SUMMARY OF RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN

STATE POLICY MECHANISMS AND EDUCATIONAL POLICY GOALS

	EFFICIENCY	EQUITY	QUALITY
1. STRUCTURAL ORGANIZATION	Centralized Professional Authority	Enhanced Client Access: Decentralized Advisory Grps.	Development of New Planning & Support Structures
2. REVENUE GENERATION	Local Control of Taxation	Highlight Federal & State Responsibility	Attention to Funding Levels and Decision Timing
3. RESOURCE ALLOCATION	Professional Dominance: "Economies of Scale"	Categorical Funding for Target Populations	De-regulation with focus on Accountability & Incentives
4. PROGRAM DEFINITION	Universalistic Standards: Carnegie Units and Tracking	Heterogeneous Grouping: Mainstreaming & Remediation	Local Planning, Dissemination of Innovative Programs
5. PERSONNEL TRAINING & CERTIFICATION	Certification & Tenure Laws	Multicultural Experience & Affirmative Action	More Teacher Training & Competency Testing
6. STUDENT TESTING & ASSESSMENT	Achievement & Ability Testing for Program Placement	Testing for Program Evaluation & Stud. Diagnosis	Testing for Certification of Competence on Exit
7. CURRICULUM MATERIALS DEVELOPMENT	Standardization of Texts by Professionals	Represeantative Portrayal of Minorities in All Texts	Technical Sophistication & Sequencing of Materials

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